

# California Commission on Aging

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GAVIN NEWSOM, Governor

**Executive Director**  
Karol Swartzlander

February 19, 2021

Thomás J. Aragón, MD, Dr.PH  
Director, California Department of Public Health

Via Email: [cdph.internetadmin@cdph.ca.gov](mailto:cdph.internetadmin@cdph.ca.gov)

Re: CDPH Allocation Guidelines for COVID-19 Vaccination During Phase 1A

Dear Dr. Aragón,

The California Commission on Aging (CCoA) is the principal advocate for older adults under California Welfare and Institutions Code. As such, the Commission would like to reiterate our December 23, 2020 comments on the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Allocation Guidelines for COVID-19 Vaccination. Our primary concern today is the lack of attention to family and informal caregivers.

The Commission was heartened during this week's Community Vaccine Advisory Committee meeting to hear Susan DeMarois from the Alzheimer's Association discuss the need to prioritize caregivers of medically vulnerable adults and persons with disabilities. Despite our earlier comments and knowing that vaccinating caregivers is a priority of other stakeholders, such as those in the developmental disability community, this group remains unprotected.

Family and informal caregivers are a vital component of the Long-Term Services and Supports spectrum. They are essential to the well-being of the individuals receiving care and their vulnerability to disease places the care recipient at risk, regardless of whether that care recipient has been vaccinated. Only San Diego County has taken the initiative to vaccinate these individuals, while other California counties await direction from the CDPH Community Vaccine Advisory Committee.

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Sacramento

We urge the Department to include family and informal caregivers in the highest priority tier possible.

Thank you for your attention to this most critical issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ellen Schmeding". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small circle above the 'i' in "Schmeding".

Ellen Schmeding  
Chair

Cc: Secretary Mark Ghaly, California Health and Human Services Agency  
Erica Pan, MD, MPH, Acting Public Health Officer, CDPH, Co-Chair, Community Vaccine  
Advisory Committee  
Nadine Burke Harris, MD, MPH, California Surgeon General, Co-Chair, Community  
Vaccine Advisory Committee  
Kim McCoy Wade, Director, California Department of Aging